



Maricopa County

News Release

Environmental Services Department

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Recreational Water Illness and Injury (RWII) Prevention Week 2011

Follow the six steps for healthy swimming

The week before Memorial Day (May 23–29, 2011) is Recreational Water Illness and Injury (RWII) Prevention Week. The goal of this observance is to raise awareness about healthy and safe swimming behaviors, including ways to prevent recreational water illnesses (RWIs) and injuries.

RWIs are caused by germs spread by swallowing, breathing in mists or aerosols of, or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, hot tubs, water parks, water play areas, interactive fountains, lakes, rivers, or oceans. RWIs can also be caused by chemicals in the water or chemicals that evaporate from the water and cause indoor air quality problems.

In the past two decades there has been an increase in the number of Recreational Water Illness (RWI) outbreaks associated with swimming pools, water parks, and spas.

“While pool operators and the Maricopa County Pools Program strive to do our part in ensuring health codes and safety measures at public and semi-public pools, during this week, all swimmers are being reminded to also do their part”, says John Kolman, director of the Maricopa County Environmental Services department. “All bathers should safely enjoy the recreational water activities throughout the season without making themselves, or anyone else, sick.”

Always follow the six steps for Healthy Swimming

Maricopa County Pools Program encourages everyone to follow the six steps for Healthy Swimming. The first three discuss keeping germs that may be in the water from causing recreational water illnesses (RWIs) and the rest address keeping germs out of the water:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick.
- Don't swallow the pool water. Avoid getting water in your mouth.
- Practice good hygiene. Shower with soap before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.

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- Take children on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. Waiting to hear "I have to go" may mean that it's too late.
- Change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at poolside. Germs can spread in and around the pool.
- Wash children thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming. Invisible amounts of fecal matter can end up in the pool.

If you need to report any complaint related to a RWI, you may contact the Environmental Services Department Complaints line at: 602-506-6616.

For more information, you may call the Healthy Swimming Hotline: 602-506-7900, or visit www.maricopa.gov/EnvSvc/.

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The Maricopa County Environmental Services department Swimming Pools Program (under the Water & Waste Management Division) approves and regulates public and semi-public pools, wading pools or special use pools, spas and artificial and semi-artificial bathing lakes. Public and semi-public pools, spas and bathing lakes are typically owned and operated by municipalities or businesses such as hotels, apartment complexes, homeowner's associations, churches, schools and other government, non-profit or commercial enterprises. The Swimming Pools Program does not regulate or approve plans for the construction of new or modification of existing private residential pools, spas and bathing lakes.